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Student-led Telehealth Outreach to Connect Low-Health-Literate, High-Risk Patients in New Orleans to Ochsner Health During The COVID-19 Pandemic

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Background & Aims

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the delivery of healthcare and medical education. Patients were harshly impacted by the COVID-19 due to the mental health issues resulting from social isolation, separation from healthcare services, and disparities related to access to virtual medical care. Students were impacted the most by the limitation of student in-person interactions with patients. This project proposes a potential solution to these issues brought out by the pandemic.

In conjunction with the existing Ochsner MedVantage Network Innovation (OMNI) project, the UQ Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG) proposes to utilize the Gold Foundation grant to train low-telehealth-literate patients to use Ochsner-provided mobile devices and support patients' connection to Ochsner Health. This project will be a proof of concept on how to implement and improve telehealth usage in resource-poor populations and environments.

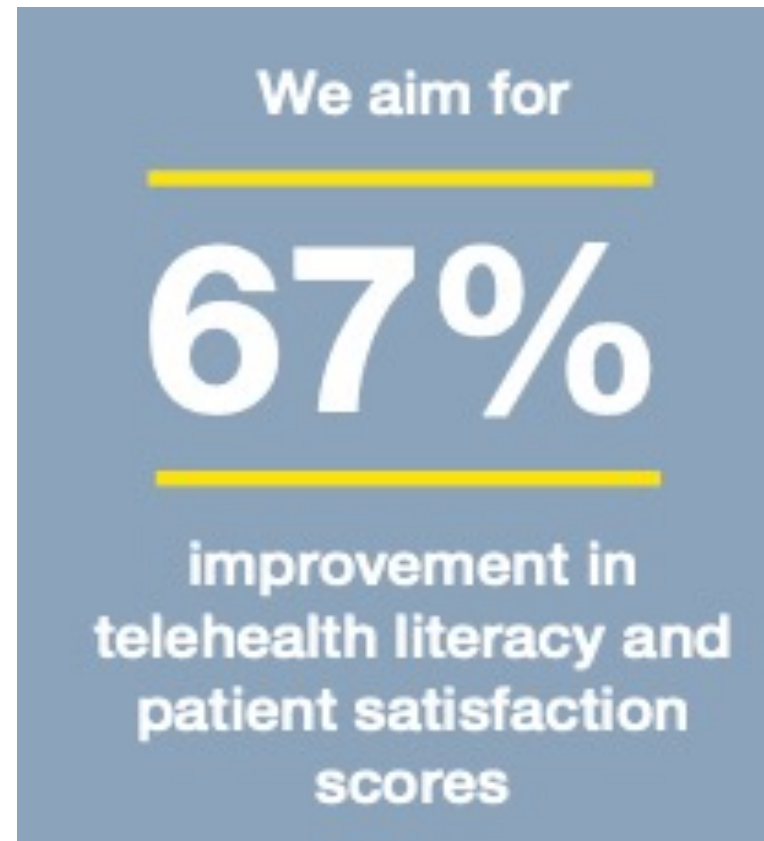
Pending Approval

EPIC EMR build-out and legal clearance for independent student encounters (9/2021)



Phase I

In the initial phase, student volunteers will meet with patients before or after their existing scheduled in-person visits with a MedVantage clinic physician. Students will train patients on logging into the Ochsner patient portal. Students will perform tech support for patients as they log in and learn to access the virtual visits component. Patients will also receive a step-by-step instruction sheet to take home.



Phase II

In the second phase, students will perform independent virtual education encounters on disease education via EPIC and MyOchsner. All information for these virtual lessons is derived directly from widely used, evidence-based resources like UpToDate and Merck Manuals. After each virtual visit, patients will receive fact sheets summarizing the disease education lesson for that session.

Timeline

Phase I patient portal access lessons (8–9/2021)

Phase II independent student encounters scheduled as virtual appointments (10/2021)

Outcomes

This project creates a novel standard for student engagement with patients in the emerging culture of virtual medicine. We hope to scale this pilot project to the level of community health clinics within the Ochsner Health system in the future. The incorporation of this telehealth model into community centers would enable high-risk and low-telehealth-literate patients to access telehealth visits from home or from local community-based locations. This work will continue as the patients have ongoing medical needs that can be met during virtual visits. Additionally, as the community health clinics adopt this model, students will be a vital component of the implementation and administration process.

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